

In these uncertain times, we are fortunate to have a man with such high regard for the law serving our country and protecting our interests.

In closing, former Clinton Cabinet member Henry Cisneros just this month praised Judge Gonzales as "better qualified than many recent Attorneys General," and one who can rely on memories of humble beginnings, using his words, "to understand the realities many Americans still confront in their lives."

Mr. Cisneros's sentiments are widely shared. Judge Gonzales is highly qualified to be America's next Attorney General. He will make America safer, more secure. He will lead the pursuit of justice. I urge my colleagues to offer their full support to the first Hispanic-American Attorney General, Alberto Gonzales, the man from Humble.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business until 10:45 a.m., with the first half of the time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee and the second half of the time under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the entire 1 hour, 60 minutes, that had been allocated for morning business still be allocated, equally divided between the Republican and Democratic sides.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. FRIST. Just reserving the right to object, I don't believe we will be using all our time in morning business. I would like to get to Judge Gonzales formally—we said at 10:45, at which time the chairman and ranking member are going to come. I think we will be yielding back some of our morning business time. If we can still shoot for 10:45, I think that will give your side an adequate 30 minutes in morning business.

Mr. DURBIN. I don't want to presume, but if we could have 30 minutes as originally allocated, that would be consistent with my request.

Mr. FRIST. Madam President, we had not originally said 30 minutes either side, but if you need 30 minutes this morning in morning business, that will be fine. We would like to start at 10:45, if possible, if that will give you adequate time.

Mr. DURBIN. If I could revise the request that the first 30 minutes of morn-

ing business be allocated to the Democratic side and the remaining time until 10:45 be allocated to the Republican side?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Thank you, Madam President.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

GUARD AND RESERVE ENHANCEMENT BENEFITS ACT

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, this past weekend we witnessed a very important step forward in Iraq, as citizens around the country turned out to vote for a new National Assembly. Many Iraqis appear to have embraced the election and I, as so many others, was encouraged to see millions of them exercise their right to vote. But this past weekend's vote also really pushes to the forefront an important question back here, right here at home, about what we are doing to take care of the thousands of American soldiers who are serving us so honorably in this still very dangerous country.

Just before the elections, several news outlets reported that the Army had decided to keep our troops at their current level in Iraq for at least another 2 years. I have one of those stories here from the Tuesday, January 25, edition of the Washington Post. It is headlined, "Army plans to keep Iraq troop level through '06."

I want to read a portion of that story. It says:

With the Pentagon having relied heavily on reservists to fill out deployments to Iraq, military officers have warned recently that the pool of available part-time soldiers is dwindling. By later this year, when the Army is scheduled to begin its fourth rotation of troops since the invasion in March 2003, all 15 of the National Guard's most readily deployable brigades will have been mobilized.

Although other Guard troops remain and could be tapped for Iraq duty, they belong to units that historically have not received the same priority in equipping and training as the brigades chosen to go in the rotations so far.

"It doesn't mean that the cupboard is bare," Lovelace said. "It just becomes a challenge then for the National Guard."

As the Army reaches farther down in the reserve force, Lovelace said, the amount of "pre-mobilization" time necessary to get the troops ready to send to Iraq is likely to increase.

"We're not going to send anybody into combat who is not trained and ready" the three-star general said. But he noted that already in each rotation, the amount of pre-mobilization time required has increased.

To continue to be able to draw on the better trained reservists, Army officials have said they are considering petitioning Rumsfeld to extend the 24-month limit on the total time a reservist could be caned to active duty.

Madam President, I ask that the full text of the story be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 25, 2005]

ARMY PLANS TO KEEP IRAQ TROOP LEVEL THROUGH '06—YEAR-LONG ACTIVE-DUTY STINTS LIKELY TO CONTINUE

(By Bradley Graham)

The U.S. Army expects to keep its troop strength in Iraq at the current level of about 120,000 for at least two more years, according to the Army's top operations officer.

While allowing for the possibility that the levels could decrease or increase depending on security conditions and other factors, Lt. Gen. James J. Lovelace Jr. told reporters yesterday that the assumption of little change through 2006 represents "the most probable case."

Recent disclosures that the Pentagon plans to beef up training of Iraqi security forces and press them into action more quickly has fueled speculation that the Bush administration could be preparing to reduce the number of U.S. troops significantly this year. As more Iraqi troops join the fight, the thinking goes, U.S. troops could begin to withdraw.

But Lovelace's remarks indicated that the Army is not yet counting on any such reduction. Indeed, the general said, the Army expects to continue rotating active-duty units in and out of Iraq in year-long deployments and is looking for ways to dip even deeper into reserve forces—even as leaders of the reserves have warned that the Pentagon could be running out of such units.

"We're making the assumption that the level of effort is going to continue," Lovelace said.

In a related development, Senate and House aides said yesterday that the White House will announce today plans to request an additional \$80 billion to finance the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. That would come on top of \$25 billion already appropriated for the fiscal year that began Oct. 1. White House budget spokesman Chad Kolton declined to comment.

White House budget director Joshua B. Bolten is to describe the package to lawmakers today, but the budget request will come later, the aides said. Administration officials have said privately for several weeks that they will seek the additional funding, the result of continuing high costs incurred battling an unexpectedly strong insurgency in Iraq.

Lovelace, who assumed his post of deputy chief of staff for operations in October, spoke to a small group of Pentagon reporters in what had been billed as an informal "meet and greet" session. The conversation quickly focused on the Army's planning for Iraq.

The number of U.S. Army and other forces in Iraq rose to 150,000 last month in what Pentagon officials described as an effort to bolster security ahead of Iraqi elections this weekend.

Lovelace made it clear that the Army's assumption about future U.S. force levels was not meant to prejudice likely trends in either Iraq's security situation or development of its security services. He said the planning is intended to ensure that enough units would be ready if needed and to give U.S. troops a basis on which to organize their own lives.

"It's really about us providing the predictability to our own soldiers," he said. "It has nothing to do with the Iraqi army; it has everything to do with our own institutional agility."